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Term:	L12 and updat\$				
Display:	50	Documents in <u>Display Format:</u>	-	Starting with Number	1
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<i>DB=PGPB,USPT,USOC,EPAB,JPAB,DWPI,TDBD; PLUR=YES; OP=OR</i>			
<u>L13</u>	L12 and updat\$	18	<u>L13</u>
<u>L12</u>	L11 and inventory	18	<u>L12</u>
<u>L11</u>	L10 and (product near database)	19	<u>L11</u>
<u>L10</u>	L7 and contact	38	<u>L10</u>
<u>L9</u>	L8 and contact	8	<u>L9</u>
<u>L8</u>	L7 and complaint	8	<u>L8</u>
<u>L7</u>	L6 and (customer near database)	49	<u>L7</u>
<u>L6</u>	warranty near information	546	<u>L6</u>
<u>L5</u>	warrantynet near information	0	<u>L5</u>
<u>L4</u>	waranty near information	0	<u>L4</u>
<u>L3</u>	warantty near information	0	<u>L3</u>
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Term: <input type="text" value="L13 and (customer near request\$)"/> <input type="button" value="Search"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/> <input type="button" value="Interrupt"/>	
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<u>L13</u>	L12 and warranty	62	<u>L13</u>
<u>L12</u>	(consumer near service) and (product near information)	369	<u>L12</u>
<u>L11</u>	l10 and (database)	3	<u>L11</u>
<u>L10</u>	L9 and warranty	3	<u>L10</u>
<u>L9</u>	l8 or (20020040325).pn.	4	<u>L9</u>
<u>L8</u>	(20020077923).pn.	2	<u>L8</u>
<u>L7</u>	L6 and complaint	1	<u>L7</u>
<u>L6</u>	(warranty near information) and (consumer near service)	42	<u>L6</u>
<u>L5</u>	L4 and (consumer near service)	7	<u>L5</u>
<u>L4</u>	L1 and (warranty near information)	41	<u>L4</u>
<u>L3</u>	L2 and (warranty near information)	7	<u>L3</u>
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<u>L2</u>	L1 and (consumer near service)	189	<u>L2</u>
<u>L1</u>	705/\$.ccls.	9749	<u>L1</u>

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L13 and (customer near request\$)

Term:



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<u>L8</u>	(20020077923).pn.	2	<u>L8</u>
<u>L7</u>	L6 and complaint	1	<u>L7</u>
<u>L6</u>	(warranty near information) and (consumer near service)	42	<u>L6</u>
<u>L5</u>	L4 and (consumer near service)	7	<u>L5</u>
<u>L4</u>	L1 and (warranty near information)	41	<u>L4</u>
<u>L3</u>	L2 and (warranty near information)	7	<u>L3</u>
<i>DB=USPT; PLUR=YES; OP=OR</i>			
<u>L2</u>	L1 and (consumer near service)	189	<u>L2</u>
<u>L1</u>	705/\$.ccls.	9749	<u>L1</u>

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L15: Entry 1 of 1

File: PGPB

Apr 4, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020040325 A1

TITLE: Method for managing product information and method for requesting repairs

Pre-Grant Publication (PGPub) Document Number:
20020040325

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0004] Generally, after a customer purchases a home electronic product, the customer is required to individually maintain a warranty paper sheet carried with the product. When the customer requests a repair of the product the customer purchased, the customer has to find the warranty paper sheet and then make a phone call to a telephone number of a service center described on the warranty paper sheet in order to request to repair the product. Otherwise, the customer directly brings the product to the shop that can repair the product and then requests the shop to repair the product.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0056] In step S102, when the shop 30 creates a new purchase number based on the decision of the customer at the cashier. For example, the new purchase number created by the shop 30 includes a shop number identifying the shop 30 and a management number. In a case in which a transceiver function is provided in a customer-cellular phone 40 (hereinafter, the customer-cellular phone 40 represents any one of the customer-cellular phone 40-1 through 40-n), the new purchase number and an e-mail address of the service center 100 are transmitted to the customer-cellular phone 40 by the communication means 35 provided to the shop 30. The email address of the service center 100 can be a service center managed by a maker of the product that the customer purchased, or a maintenance center for the shop 30 as a service center. The shop 30 may select any one of the service centers as the service center 100.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0057] The customer-cellular phone 40 receives the purchase number and the e-mail address of the service center 100 (step S103) . The customer-cellular phone 40 sends the shop 30 a telephone number, an e-mail address, a name, an address and the like as user information of the customer (step S104). In a case in which the user information is registered in the customer-cellular phone 40, the registered user information is sent to the shop 30.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0058] After the communication means 35 of the shop 30 transmits the purchase number and the e-mail address of the service center 100 in the step S102, the communication means 35 automatically receives the user information from the customer-cellular phone 40 and then transmits purchased product information concerning the product that the customer purchased, the purchase number, and the user information (step S105). When the user information received from the customer-cellular phone 40 does not include the e-mail address of the customer, the name, the address or the like, the communication means 35 of the shop 30 may connect to a communication service provided by a communication company to obtain the above information based on the customer telephone number. Alternatively, when the shop 30 confirms the customer the user registration, the shop 30 may obtain necessary information from the customer.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0067] In FIG. 4, a purchased product list 60 for a telephone number "090-1111-1111" of a customer "FUJI, Michiko" is displayed at the customer-cellular phone 40.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0087] In step S120, a service person of the local service center searches for the product

information from the product information DB 51 and the repair request information for from repair request information DB 56 based on the distributed repair request sheet 71, and then contacts the customer to confirm a trouble situation. The service person telephones the customer to confirm details of repair and then visits the customer to repair the product if necessary.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0105] In step S202, the service center 100 retrieves the customer information corresponding to the telephone number of the customer from the customer information DB 52, and then generates a list of products that the customer purchased. The service center 100 replies to the customer-cellular phone 40 by sending generated list of the products as the purchased product list.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0116] The shipping-to information 721 includes an address of the customer who requests to repair, a name, a telephone number and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0118] The shipping-from information 725 includes an address of the local service center that repaired, a name, a telephone number and the like.

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L11: Entry 2 of 3

File: PGPB

Apr 4, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020040325 A1

TITLE: Method for managing product information and method for requesting repairs

Abstract Paragraph:

In a method for managing product information, warranty information corresponding to a purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer is retrieved from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product and then a request process corresponding to a request item indicated from the customer-terminal is conducted.

Pre-Grant Publication (PGPub) Document Number:

20020040325

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0002] The present invention generally relates to methods for managing production information and methods for requesting a repair, and more particularly to a method for managing production information, in which purchased product information concerning the product, shop information concerning a shop and customer information concerning a customer who purchased the product from the shop are managed so that the customer is not required to maintain a warranty paper sheet of a product that the customer purchased and which method can provide the product information of a product that the shop sold and can also provide purchased product information of a product that the customer purchased, and a method for requesting a repair, in which a customer, who purchased a product, can request to repair the product by using a cellular phone of the customer.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0004] Generally, after a customer purchases a home electronic product, the customer is required to individually maintain a warranty paper sheet carried with the product. When the customer requests a repair of the product the customer purchased, the customer has to find the warranty paper sheet and then make a phone call to a telephone number of a service center described on the warranty paper sheet in order to request to repair the product. Otherwise, the customer directly brings the product to the shop that can repair the product and then requests the shop to repair the product.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0005] However, there are disadvantages in the conventional way of that the customer maintains warranty paper sheet by ones self.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0006] When a product that the customer purchased has a problem, the customer has to find the warranty paper sheet and confirm a period of warranty. Thus, it takes time before the customer asks the shop to repair the product.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0009] A more specific object of the present invention is to provide a method for managing product information in which purchased product information concerning a product that a customer purchased and information concerning the customer and a shop where the customer purchased the product can be centralized in a service center supported by product makers, so that the customer is not required to maintain warranty information of the purchased product, product information of purchased product can be provided to the customer, and recall information can be directly provided to the customer who purchased a product to be recalled.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0011] The above objects of the present invention are achieved by a method for managing product information, the method including the steps of: (a) retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer, from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; (b) informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved in the step (a) to the customer-terminal; and (c) conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0012] According to the present invention, in the method, the warranty information is sent to the customer-terminal based on the purchased product identification received from the customer-terminal. Therefore, the customer does not have to maintain a warranty paper sheet of the purchased product by himself. In addition, the selective request items are informed with the warranty information to the customer-terminal. Therefore, the customer can request a desired process by simply selecting one of the selective request items from the customer-terminal.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0014] The warranty information can be information including a warranty period while the product is guaranteed.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0015] In addition, the above objects of the present invention are achieved by the method wherein the sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and the step (c) including the steps of: (d) distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching for the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification receive from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and (e) maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database. The method can further include the steps of: (f) searching for the purchased product identification corresponding to the repair contents showing a recall from the repair history database; (g) extracting the customer information from the sales information management database based on the purchased product identification searched in the step (f); and (h) informing recall information to recall a product, to each customer who purchased the product based on the customer information extracted in the step (g).

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0016] According to the present invention, in the method, the customer information of the customer who purchased a product to be recalled can be extracted from the repair history information database including repair contents related to the recall and the sales information management database. Also, based on the customer information, the customer can directly obtain information concerning the recall.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0020] The other objects of the present invention are achieved by a method for requesting to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, the method including the steps of: displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from the product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items received from the support center.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0021] According to the present invention, in the method, the customer who purchased the product can send the purchased product identification by selecting the product from the product list displayed at the customer-terminal. In addition, the customer can refer to the received

warranty information and also can request to repair the purchased product by simply selecting a desired request item from the selective request items transmitted from the support center. Therefore, the customer is not required to maintain the warranty paper sheet of the purchased product and the customer can easily request to repair the purchased product.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0049] The storage unit 16 includes a hard disk and stores files, databases and a product information program.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0059] The service center 100 retrieves necessary product information from a product information DB 51 concerning products handled by the shop 30 based on the purchased product information received from the shop 30, the purchase number and a purchased date and then creates warranty information. Also, the service center 100 creates customer information including the warranty information (step S106). The created customer information is registered to customer information DB 52 in the storage unit 16 in FIG. 2.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0062] As described above, from the user registration registered by the customer-cellular phone 40, the service center 100 can maintain the warranty of the product that the customer purchased, instead of the conventional way in that the customer maintains a warranty paper sheet by ones self.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0063] In addition, the customer-cellular phone 40 creates information corresponding to the conventional warranty paper sheet. Therefore, it is possible to eliminate a trouble of maintaining the warranty paper sheet for the customer.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0073] In step S113, the service center 100 obtains the warranty period based on the purchase number and then sends the customer-cellular phone 40 a confirmation message including the warranty period, contents for confirming whether or not the product is repaired within the predetermined period and contents for confirming whether or not the customer wants to repair the product at this time. The confirmation message sent to the customer-cellular phone may include at least the following four request items:

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0079] In step S114, the customer receives the confirmation message from the service center 100 by the customer-cellular phone 40 and then confirms the warranty period. By informing the warranty period, the customer easily confirms that the repair is before or after the warranty is expired. The customer selects one request item from the received confirmation message. That is, the customer replies to the service center 100 by an e-mail input by selecting one of request item numbers 1 through 4; since the customer indicates one request item by selecting the number, it is possible for the customer to easily create a message.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0112] The request product information 713 includes a maker name, a manufacture number, a product name, a warranty period showing a warranty expiration date for the product that the customer purchased and information showing whether or not the product had been repaired before.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0155] Databases maintained by the service center according to the embodiment of the present invention will now be described.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0157] In FIG. 14A, the product information DB 51, for example, may be a database (DB) for products registered by makers that make a contract with the service center 100. Each product information maintained in product information DB 51 includes a record number, a manufacture number of a product, a product name, a warranty period showing a period in which the product is guaranteed, a replacement time showing a time to replace the product, a collection fee showing an expense to collect the product, lot information showing a lot by which the product is manufactured, a manufactured date of the product, a maker name that manufactured the product, a

maker e-mail to contact the maker and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0158] The warranty period is referred to when the customer information is registered in the customer information DB 52.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0167] In FIG. 15A, each customer information, which the service center 100 registered in the customer information DB 52, includes a record number, warranty information concerning a warranty, a cellular phone number of the customer, a phone e-mail of the customer, a name of the customer, an address of the customer and the like. The warranty information includes the purchase number including a shop number, a product name and a manufacture number for purchased product information, a device address, a purchased date when the customer purchased the product, a warranty period for guaranteeing the product and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0171] A date calculated by adding the warranty period managed in the product information DB 51 to the purchased date is defined as the warranty period in the warranty information. The warranty period is used when the customer requests to repair the product.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0193] According to the embodiment of the present invention, the service center 100 centralizes the information concerning products that are sold and customers that purchased. Therefore, when the product that the customer purchased needs repair, the service center 100 can inform the warranty period to the customer in response to the repair request message from the customer-cellular phone 40. Consequently, the customer is not required to maintain a warranty paper sheet for the product that the customer purchased. Also, in this case, it is possible for the customer to make a repair request by simply selecting a product from the purchased product list displayed at the customer-cellular phone 40.

CLAIMS:

1. A method for managing product information, said method comprising the steps of: (a) retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer, from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; (b) informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved in said step (a) to the customer-terminal; and (c) conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.
2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step (c) comprises the step of deleting the purchased product identification and the warranty information of a product identified by the purchased product identification, which purchased product identification is received from the customer-terminal, from the sales information management database when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to delete information related to a product that the customer purchased.
3. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and said step (c) comprises the steps of: (d) distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching from the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and (e) maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database.
5. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said step (b) comprises the steps of: checking whether or not a same repair is conducted within a predetermined period, by searching for the repair history information from said repair history database based on the purchased product

identification received from the customer; and informing said warranty information and said request items with a check result to the customer.

6. The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising the steps of: (f) searching for the purchased product identification corresponding to the repair contents showing a recall from said repair history database; (g) extracting the customer information from said sales information management database based on the purchased product identification searched in the step (f); and (h) informing recall information to recall a product, to each customer who purchased the product based on the customer information extracted in the step (g).

7. The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising the steps of: (i) searching for the repair history information from the repair history information database based on the purchased product identification when a request message including the purchased product identification and requesting a repair status is received from the customer; and (j) sending the repair status created based on the repair history information searched in the step (i) to the customer-terminal.

10. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the steps of: (o) maintaining the purchased product identification including shop identification identifying a shop and the customer information by corresponding to the purchased product identification in said sales information management database; and (p) creating a product list listing product information of purchased product of the customer based on the purchased product identification corresponding to the customer information retrieved from the sales information management database when the customer information is received, and sending the product list to the customer-terminal.

11. The method as claimed in claim 10, further comprising the steps of: (q) obtaining the purchased product identification of products which the shop sold, by searching for the shop identification of the shop from said sales information management database when a request message requesting to obtain information related to product, which are sold by the shop and are consumed, is received from the shop-terminal of the shop; (r) creating need-to-replace product information of products that are identified by the purchased product identification obtained in the step (q) and are needed to replace, by referring to a table maintaining a replacement time of each product; and (s) notifying the need-to-replace product information to the shop-terminal.

12. The method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising the step of sending advertisement information based on the customer information retrieved from said sales information management database by the purchased product identification of the product, which are needed to replace, when advertisement information including advertisement contents is received from the shop-terminal.

13. A computer-readable recording medium having a program recorded thereon for causing a computer to manage product information, said program comprising the codes of: (a) retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer, from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; (b) informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved by said code (a) to the customer-terminal; and (c) conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.

14. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 13, wherein said sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and said code (c) comprises the codes of: (d) distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching from the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification receive from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and (e) maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database.

15. An apparatus for managing product information, said apparatus comprising: a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; a warranty information retrieving part retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer, from said sales information management database; a request item informing part informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved by said warranty information retrieving part to the customer-terminal; and a request process conducting part conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.

16. The apparatus as claimed in claim 15, wherein said sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and said request process conducting part comprises: a repair request sheet distributing part distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching from the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification receive from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and a repair contents maintaining part maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database.

17. A method for requesting to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, said method comprising the steps of: displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from said product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items are received from the support center.

18. A computer-readable recording medium having a program recorded thereon for causing a computer to request to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, said computer-readable recording medium comprising the codes of: (v) displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; (w) sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from said product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and (x) requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items are received from the support center.

19. An apparatus for requesting to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, said apparatus comprising: a displaying part displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; a sending part sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from said product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and a repair requesting part requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items are received from the support center.

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L14: Entry 7 of 16

File: PGPB

Nov 15, 2001

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20010042022 A1

TITLE: Systems and methods for point of purchase product registration

Abstract Paragraph:

The invention provides systems and methods that allow retail entities to let consumers register a product or warranty at the point of sale. More specifically, the systems and methods described herein allow a retailer to identify a point during a purchasing transaction wherein the consumer has completed a transaction. At that time, the retailer may present to the consumer an interface that the consumer may easily complete to allow the consumer to participate in a product or warranty registration process. As such, the systems and methods described herein make the product registration process part of the purchase transaction and therefore make the product registration process seamless and more facile. Consequently it is understood that consumer participation within the product registration process increases.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0003] Today, to be an effective competitor within the marketplace a company needs as much information about its customers as possible. Manufacturers that create products which are delivered through third party retail distribution channels face the problem that they are somewhat removed from their customer base. Thus, it is often difficult for manufacturers to actually interact, or collect information, about the customers who choose to buy their products. To address this issue, manufacturers commonly employ a product registration or warranty registration process that requests a customer to return a postcard to the manufacturer wherein the postcard contains information about that customer. With the returned postcard, the manufacturer then has some idea about the characteristics, demographics, or other features about the people buying their products.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0004] Today, product registration is a broken process that provides little value to the manufacturers. For example, the registration process most commonly employed today involves providing within the packaging materials for a new product, a stamped addressed postcard that may be completed by the consumer and returned to the manufacturer through the mail. Although manufacturers strive to make this process as simple and painless as possible, response rates for returning such product and warranty registration cards are notably low. For the millions of products sold to consumers each year, fewer than 10 percent of product cards are ever returned.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0005] In addition, manufacturers face cost issues and an inefficient process for evaluating the collected information. Processing costs for returned cards can be significant, and turnaround for compiled, usable data may take many months. Because of low response rates and incorrect information, traditional warranty/registration databases are of limited use for either market analysis or for communicating with customers.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0008] The systems and methods described herein provide for allowing retail entities to have consumers register a product or warranty with the associated manufacturer at the point of sale. More specifically, the systems and methods described herein allow a retailer to identify a point during a purchasing transaction wherein the consumer has completed a transaction. At that time, the retailer may present to the consumer a form that the consumer may easily complete to allow the consumer to participate in a product or warranty registration process. As such, the systems and methods described herein make the product registration process part of the purchase transaction and therefore make the product registration process seamless and more facile. Consequently it is understood that consumer participation within the product registration

Record Display Form

process increases.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0009] More particularly, the systems and methods described herein include methods for product registration that comprise providing an online site for purchasing a product, providing an online registration form for registering the purchased product, identifying during the purchase transaction a completion point representative of when the purchase is complete, and displaying the online registration form subsequent to completion point for allowing a user to register a product, warranty, or other manufacturer provided incentive.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0010] Registration can include the act of identifying to a manufacturer an interest in receiving information about a product, a product recall, a safety notice, opportunities to purchase an extended warranty or the expiration of an existing warranty, proof of purchase for insurance purposes, and online manuals. The opportunity to quickly and easily register products purchased at an online site allows for more facile management of assets. This is particularly important to small businesses as small businesses need to create inventories of the products and goods they own for insurance purposes.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0011] The term registration or the term registration process will be understood to encompass the collection of data from consumers after the purchase of a product, service or other item from a business. These terms shall include, but not be limited to, registration processes wherein information is collected from a consumer about a purchased product or service and that information is delivered to the manufacturer or provider of that service for purposes of receiving warranty protection, extended warranty protection, product recall information, products safety information, to receive promotional information, or for any other purpose. Moreover, it will be understood that the terms registration and registration process do not require the delivery of consumer information to a manufacturer or other provider of good or services.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0013] The systems may also include a step of aggregating product registration data for determining the purchasing behavior of the consumer. Additionally, the practices will allow for employing product registration data for providing to a consumer information associated with a product that consumer has purchased. The information associated with a product may include information about a product recall, a warranty expiration, information about similar products, such as sales incentives on those similar products, and a survey form for collecting consumer satisfaction information.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0015] In this practice, the methods may also include employing the registration information for each tracked purchase to generate a database representative of purchase activity of the consumer. Additionally the practices may include allowing a manufacturer to employ the registration information for a product manufactured by the manufacturer to deliver an e-mail advertisements for a product to a consumer. Optionally the e-mail advertisements may include a link to a retail site offering a product for sale and the e-mail advertisements may include a purchased incentive where a portion of the incentive is underwritten by the retail site and a portion of the incentive is underwritten by the manufacturer.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0017] In a further aspect, the invention may be understood as systems for allowing a retail site to offer a consumer the opportunity to register a product worksheet or other incentive at the point of purchase. These systems may include a server capable of receiving information from the retail site, and processing that information to determine the products purchased at that site for which the server has an entry in a database indicating that product registration information is available for that product. The server further includes a page generator for generating a web page that may be provided to the consumer for collecting from the consumer information that is to be provided to a manufacturer during the product or warranty registration process. Information returned from the consumer may be processed by the server to generate and e-mail registration notice that may be delivered to the manufacturer. The server may also receive confirmation from the manufacturer that the product has been registered, and confirmation of that registration may be forwarded from the server to the consumer.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0031] Turning again to FIG. 1, it may be seen that the online registration system 16 acts as a middleware device for products sold by an online retailer. To this end, the online registration system 16 includes a database 26 that stores information about the product registration information required for registering a product, warranty, or other incentive from a manufacturer. The online registration system 16 builds the database 16 by contacting different manufacturers, such as depicted manufacturers 18A and 18B. For example, the online registration system 16 may be operated as a service that will contact different manufacturers of consumer goods, for example Sony, Firestone, Evenflo, MacLeran, or any other manufacturer. By contacting these manufacturers, the online the registration service may develop a database 26 that includes a plurality of data records wherein each data record is associated with a product provided by a manufacturer. Each respective record may include a registration requirements list representative of the information that is to be collected from a consumer for registering that product with associated manufacturer. This information may be provided by any source. For example, for those online retail sites that collect information from a consumer, such as name, address, telephone number, another information useful for delivering products from the retailer to the consumer, the basic demographic information for completing the product registration process may be provided by the online retail site. Similarly, the online Registration system 16 may employ cookies or other state information management systems, for pre-populating a registration page that is to be presented to a consumer. Accordingly, it will be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art that any technique suitable for collecting information for completing the product registration process may be practiced with the systems and methods described around without departing from the scope thereof.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0039] Described above the with reference to FIGS. 1 through 6 the online registration system 16 is supported by a service that the first creates an agreement with a manufacturer that the manufacturer will allow that service to register products produced by that manufacturer. However, the registration service may operate in other ways including first approaching retail sites and working with those retail sites to allow for the products sold on and site to be registered. Once a consumer registers products purchased at a site, the registration service then creates a database of products from different manufacturers that have been registered. The service may then approach the respective manufacturers and ask them whether they are interested in purchasing the registration information that has been collected for that manufacturer's products. In still other practices, the systems and methods described above may be proprietary and employed by a retail service for allowing consumers on that service to register products purchased from that site.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0042] In one practice upon receiving the confirmation of having registered a product, a consumer 12 may be provided with a password. With its password, the consumer may subsequently access the online registration system 16 directly. The consumer may then access their buy file by entering the password at that site. The buy file may contain information about the purchases the consumer has made and registered. For example, the buy file may include a list of all products purchased by that consumer, and the manufacturers that provide the product. Additionally the buy file may include information about the time and date of purchase, the site from which the product was purchased, the expiration date of any warranties provided with the products, contact information for reaching the manufacturer of the products, online manuals that show how the products work, information about resale information, such as a link to a site that indicates the present value of the product on a web auction site, and any other type of information that may be of interest to the consumer to see about the products they purchased. It is a realization of the invention, that the buy file acts as an asset management tool for allowing an individual or business to see the products they have purchased. Such an asset management tool is quite helpful for small businesses where the organization and inventorying of products and services is important for a number of reasons, including insurance purposes.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0043] Additionally, in an optional embodiment each buy file may include information for each consumer or product purchased by that consumer that indicates the consumers willingness to receive information associated with that product. For example, FIG. 6 depicts one user interface that may be provided to consumer 12 for allowing the consumer to control, typically at the consumers option, to receive different types of notification and promotional literature

for the different products purchased by that consumer. More specifically, FIG. 6 depicts a user interface 32 that is set up as an array of radio buttons 34 each of which may be a hypertext markup language control, or any other suitable type of control, that consumer 12 may activate. As can be seen from FIG. 6, the array of radio buttons 34 is provided for a particular product. Additionally, the array of radio buttons 34 allows the consumer to select for each type of possible event, such as the expiration of a warranty, a safety notification from a manufacturer, or government agency, a contest, a product recall, or a sales promotion, the type of solicitation the consumer will except. For example at a consumer's option, a consumer can choose not select any type of means for being solicited. Accordingly, the default of the radio buttons 34 is opt out the consumer 12 from receiving any solicitation. However at the consumer's option, the consumer may for example to receive warranty expiration information or notification by e-mail. A further example may be that the consumer will except recall notifications by telephone including by Mobil cellular telephone. Accordingly, the system 16 may allow a consumer to control how information is delivered to the consumer for particular product. The user interface 32 may be presented to the consumer 12 at the time of product registration, or alternatively at the time to consumer launched into the registration system 16 to view their buy file.

CLAIMS:

6. A method according to claim 4, wherein the information associated with the product includes information about warranty expiration.
11. A method according to claim 9, further comprising allowing a manufacturer to employ the registration information for a product manufactured by that manufacturer to deliver an e-mail advertisement for a product to a consumer.

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L11: Entry 1 of 3

File: PGPB

Jun 20, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020077923 A1

TITLE: Method and apparatus for performing on-line product registration

Abstract Paragraph:

A method and apparatus is provided for performing on-line registration over an open computer network (e.g., the Internet) of an item previously purchased by a customer. The method begins by receiving over the open computer network a request from the customer to register the purchased item. Next, a registration form is provided over the open computer network, which is to be completed by the customer. The registration form requests customer information such as an identifier identifying the purchased item. Upon receiving a completed registration form from the customer, a database is searched to generate a list of purchasable items. The selection of the list of purchasable items is based at least in part on the identifier that identifies the purchased item. Finally, the customer is provided with the list of purchasable items and an opportunity to purchase any one or more of the purchasable items.

Pre-Grant Publication (PGPub) Document Number:

20020077923

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0006] The present invention provides a method of performing on-line registration over an open computer network of an item previously purchased by a customer. The method begins by receiving over the open computer network a request from the customer to register the purchased item. Next, a registration form is provided over the open computer network, which is to be completed by the customer. The registration form requests customer information such as an identifier identifying the purchased item. Upon receiving a completed registration form from the customer, a database is searched to generate a list of purchasable items. The selection of the list of purchasable items is based at least in part on the identifier that identifies the purchased item. Finally, the customer is provided with the list of purchasable items and an opportunity to purchase any one or more of the purchasable items.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0022] By accessing merchant web server 130, the customer can register products he or she has purchased to activate warranties and provide traditional product registration information such as product updates, recalls, and promotions, for example. In accordance with the present invention, the registration process provides an opportunity for the merchant to offer to sell the customer additional products that may enhance his or her use and enjoyment of the purchased product being registered. For example, if the purchased product is a personal computer, the merchant may offer the customer various accessories such as a backup drive or modem, for example. Moreover, the registration process may be used to elicit information from the customer that allows the merchant to more precisely offer the customer particular products or services that best suit his or her needs. Returning to the example of the personal computer, during the registration process the merchant may prompt the customer to identify any additional equipment they own which is associated with the computer such as a game board. If the merchant determines that the customer does not have an appropriate user interface such as a joystick, for example, the merchant may immediately offer the customer a selection of different joysticks.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0023] As shown in FIG. 2, merchant web server 130 includes central processor (CPU) 205, RAM 215, ROM 220, clock 235, operating system 240, network interface 245, and data storage device 250. Web server 130 may be a conventional personal computer or computer workstation with sufficient memory and processing capability. Web server 130 must be capable of high volume transaction processing, performing a significant number of mathematical calculations in processing communications and database searches. Illustrative processors that may be employed

include a Pentium microprocessor, commonly manufactured by Intel Inc., a PowerPC available from Motorola, or an UltraSPARC processor available from Sun Microsystems.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0024] Data storage device 250 may include hard disk magnetic or optical storage units, as well as CD-ROM drives or flash memory. Data storage device 250 contains databases used in the processing of transactions in the present invention, including customer database 260, product database 255, shopping cart database 265, and HTML document database 270. In one embodiment of the invention database software, such as available from Oracle Corporation, is used to create and manage these databases.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0026] While the above embodiment describes a single computer acting as the merchant web server 130, those skilled in the art will realize that the functionality can be distributed over a plurality of computers. In another embodiment, web server 130 may be configured in a distributed architecture, wherein the databases and processors are housed in separate units or locations.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0028] Turning to FIG. 4, the system unit 321 includes a system bus or plurality of system buses 431 to which various components are coupled and by which communication between the various components is accomplished. The microprocessor 432 is connected to the system bus 431 and is supported by read only memory (ROM) 433 and random access memory (RAM) 434 also connected to system bus 431. The ROM 433 contains among other code the Basic Input-Output system (BIOS), which controls basic hardware operations such as the interaction of the disk drives and the keyboard. The RAM 434 is the main memory into which the operating system and application programs are loaded. The memory management chip 435 is connected to the system bus 431 and controls direct memory access operations including, passing data between the RAM 434 and hard disk drive 436 and floppy disk drive 437. The CD ROM 442, also coupled to the system bus 431, is used to store a large amount of data, e.g., a multimedia program or large database. Also connected to this system bus 431 are various I/O controllers: the keyboard controller 438, the mouse controller 439, the video controller 440, and the audio controller 441. The keyboard controller 438 provides the hardware interface for the keyboard 25, the controller 439 provides the hardware interface for the mouse (or other point and click device) 426, the video controller 440 is the hardware interface for the display 427, and the audio controller 441 is the hardware interface for the multimedia speakers 425a and 425b. A network interface card (NIC) interfaces to the I/O controller 450 to enable communication via path 456 to other computers over the computer network.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0030] FIG. 5 shows an exemplary process by which a customer registers a purchased product on the merchant's web site. The registration process begins at step 510 by selecting the proper hyperlink containing online registration instructions. The central processor 205 accesses the local database of HTML documents and, at step 520, returns an online registration application document to the customer's web browser. The customer can then fill out the detailed online registration form 600.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0033] Once the registration form has been completed the central processor 205 generates a unique customer ID to be assigned to the customer, also at step 540. In addition, the central processor 205 creates a database entry corresponding to the customer and stores the customer ID and the information provided by the customer on the registration form as a unique entry in the customer database 260. Database 260 may be any type of data repository including, for example, an SQL table or ASCII text file. This database entry allows the merchant web server 130 to properly track the customer's interests and purchases, as further described below.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0034] Based on the information provided by the customer on the registration form, central processor 205 searches product database 255 at step 550. Product database 255 includes product information such as the features and specifications of the various products available from the merchant. Upon retrieving the product information for the product being registered, the central processor 205 determines if any upgrades or product enhancements (e.g., product enhancements) are available for it. If so, they are sent to the customer's interface device 110 at step 560

so that the customer can determine if he or she is interested in them. If the customer is indeed interested in the upgrade or product enhancement, it may be purchased directly from the merchant's web site at step 570 in the manner described below.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0040] Continuing with reference to FIG. 5, if the customer decides to purchase an item or items, he or she can select an icon that may be included with the product information for that item or items, which has already been retrieved. The icon allows the selected item to be added to a customer "shopping-cart." The shopping-cart is a customer-specific data structure that is generated and maintained in shopping cart database 265 of merchant web server 130. The information contained in shopping cart database 265 includes a list of products that have been selected by the customer for prospective purchase. In one embodiment of the invention, the shopping cart remains available to the customer for an extended period of time, e.g., one month, following the most recent access by the customer, allowing the customer to discontinue and later resume a session without loss of data. In this way the customer can effectively conduct an extended shopping session that begins with the registration process.

CLAIMS:

1. A method of performing on-line registration over an open computer network of an item previously purchased by a customer, said method comprising the steps of: receiving over the open computer network a request from the customer to register the purchased item; providing over the open computer network a registration form to be completed by the customer, said registration form requesting customer information including an identifier identifying the purchased item; upon receiving a completed registration form from the customer, searching a database to generate a list of purchasable items, said list of purchasable items being selected based at least in part on the identifier which identifies the purchased item; and providing the customer with the list of purchasable items and an opportunity to purchase any one or more of the purchasable items.
6. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of assigning a unique identification number to the customer and creating a database entry for the customer that includes the customer information.
21. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of providing the customer with the opportunity to purchase any one or more of the purchasable items includes the step of providing a selectable icon linked to a shopping cart database.
27. An apparatus for performing on-line registration over an open computer network of an item previously purchased by a customer, comprising: a controller unit for receiving over the open computer network a request from the customer to register the purchased item; means for providing over the open computer network a registration form to be completed by the customer, said registration form requesting customer information including an identifier identifying the purchased item; means for searching a database to generate a list of purchasable items upon receiving a completed registration form from the customer, said list of purchasable items being selected based at least in part on the identifier which identifies the purchased item; and means for providing the customer with the list of purchasable items and an opportunity to purchase any one or more of the purchasable items.
32. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein said controller assigns a unique identification number to the customer and further comprising a database having a database entry for the customer that includes the customer information.

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L17: Entry 1 of 1

File: PGPB

Apr 4, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020040325 A1

TITLE: Method for managing product information and method for requesting repairs

Abstract Paragraph:

In a method for managing product information, warranty information corresponding to a purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer is retrieved from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product and then a request process corresponding to a request item indicated from the customer-terminal is conducted.

Pre-Grant Publication (PGPub) Document Number:

20020040325

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0002] The present invention generally relates to methods for managing production information and methods for requesting a repair, and more particularly to a method for managing production information, in which purchased product information concerning the product, shop information concerning a shop and customer information concerning a customer who purchased the product from the shop are managed so that the customer is not required to maintain a warranty paper sheet of a product that the customer purchased and which method can provide the product information of a product that the shop sold and can also provide purchased product information of a product that the customer purchased, and a method for requesting a repair, in which a customer, who purchased a product, can request to repair the product by using a cellular phone of the customer.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0004] Generally, after a customer purchases a home electronic product, the customer is required to individually maintain a warranty paper sheet carried with the product. When the customer requests a repair of the product the customer purchased, the customer has to find the warranty paper sheet and then make a phone call to a telephone number of a service center described on the warranty paper sheet in order to request to repair the product. Otherwise, the customer directly brings the product to the shop that can repair the product and then requests the shop to repair the product.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0005] However, there are disadvantages in the conventional way of that the customer maintains warranty paper sheet by ones self.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0006] When a product that the customer purchased has a problem, the customer has to find the warranty paper sheet and confirm a period of warranty. Thus, it takes time before the customer asks the shop to repair the product.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0009] A more specific object of the present invention is to provide a method for managing product information in which purchased product information concerning a product that a customer purchased and information concerning the customer and a shop where the customer purchased the product can be centralized in a service center supported by product makers, so that the customer is not required to maintain warranty information of the purchased product, product information of purchased product can be provided to the customer, and recall information can be directly provided to the customer who purchased a product to be recalled.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0011] The above objects of the present invention are achieved by a method for managing product information, the method including the steps of: (a) retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer, from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; (b) informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved in the step (a) to the customer-terminal; and (c) conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0012] According to the present invention, in the method, the warranty information is sent to the customer-terminal based on the purchased product identification received from the customer-terminal. Therefore, the customer does not have to maintain a warranty paper sheet of the purchased product by himself. In addition, the selective request items are informed with the warranty information to the customer-terminal. Therefore, the customer can request a desired process by simply selecting one of the selective request items from the customer-terminal.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0014] The warranty information can be information including a warranty period while the product is guaranteed.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0015] In addition, the above objects of the present invention are achieved by the method wherein the sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and the step (c) including the steps of: (d) distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching for the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification receive from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and (e) maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database. The method can further include the steps of: (f) searching for the purchased product identification corresponding to the repair contents showing a recall from the repair history database; (g) extracting the customer information from the sales information management database based on the purchased product identification searched in the step (f); and (h) informing recall information to recall a product, to each customer who purchased the product based on the customer information extracted in the step (g).

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0016] According to the present invention, in the method, the customer information of the customer who purchased a product to be recalled can be extracted from the repair history information database including repair contents related to the recall and the sales information management database. Also, based on the customer information, the customer can directly obtain information concerning the recall.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0020] The other objects of the present invention are achieved by a method for requesting to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, the method including the steps of: displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from the product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items received from the support center.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0021] According to the present invention, in the method, the customer who purchased the product can send the purchased product identification by selecting the product from the product

list displayed at the customer-terminal. In addition, the customer can refer to the received warranty information and also can request to repair the purchased product by simply selecting a desired request item from the selective request items transmitted from the support center. Therefore, the customer is not required to maintain the warranty paper sheet of the purchased product and the customer can easily request to repair the purchased product.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0049] The storage unit 16 includes a hard disk and stores files, databases and a product information program.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0056] In step S102, when the shop 30 creates a new purchase number based on the decision of the customer at the cashier. For example, the new purchase number created by the shop 30 includes a shop number identifying the shop 30 and a management number. In a case in which a transceiver function is provided in a customer-cellular phone 40 (hereinafter, the customer-cellular phone 40 represents any one of the customer-cellular phone 40-1 through 40-n), the new purchase number and an e-mail address of the service center 100 are transmitted to the customer-cellular phone 40 by the communication means 35 provided to the shop 30. The email address of the service center 100 can be a service center managed by a maker of the product that the customer purchased, or a maintenance center for the shop 30 as a service center. The shop 30 may select any one of the service centers as the service center 100.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0057] The customer-cellular phone 40 receives the purchase number and the e-mail address of the service center 100 (step S103) . The customer-cellular phone 40 sends the shop 30 a telephone number, an e-mail address, a name, an address and the like as user information of the customer (step S104). In a case in which the user information is registered in the customer-cellular phone 40, the registered user information is sent to the shop 30.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0058] After the communication means 35 of the shop 30 transmits the purchase number and the e-mail address of the service center 100 in the step S102, the communication means 35 automatically receives the user information from the customer-cellular phone 40 and then transmits purchased product information concerning the product that the customer purchased, the purchase number, and the user information (step S105). When the user information received from the customer-cellular phone 40 does not include the e-mail address of the customer, the name, the address or the like, the communication means 35 of the shop 30 may connect to a communication service provided by a communication company to obtain the above information based on the customer telephone number. Alternatively, when the shop 30 confirms the customer the user registration, the shop 30 may obtain necessary information from the customer.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0059] The service center 100 retrieves necessary product information from a product information DB 51 concerning products handled by the shop 30 based on the purchased product information received from the shop 30, the purchase number and a purchased date and then creates warranty information. Also, the service center 100 creates customer information including the warranty information (step S106). The created customer information is registered to customer information DB 52 in the storage unit 16 in FIG. 2.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0062] As described above, from the user registration registered by the customer-cellular phone 40, the service center 100 can maintain the warranty of the product that the customer purchased, instead of the conventional way in that the customer maintains a warranty paper sheet by ones self.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0063] In addition, the customer-cellular phone 40 creates information corresponding to the conventional warranty paper sheet. Therefore, it is possible to eliminate a trouble of maintaining the warranty paper sheet for the customer.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0067] In FIG. 4, a purchased product list 60 for a telephone number "090-1111-1111" of a customer "FUJI, Michiko" is displayed at the customer-cellular phone 40.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0073] In step S113, the service center 100 obtains the warranty period based on the purchase number and then sends the customer-cellular phone 40 a confirmation message including the warranty period, contents for confirming whether or not the product is repaired within the predetermined period and contents for confirming whether or not the customer wants to repair the product at this time. The confirmation message sent to the customer-cellular phone may include at least the following four request items:

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0079] In step S114, the customer receives the confirmation message from the service center 100 by the customer-cellular phone 40 and then confirms the warranty period. By informing the warranty period, the customer easily confirms that the repair is before or after the warranty is expired. The customer selects one request item from the received confirmation message. That is, the customer replies to the service center 100 by an e-mail input by selecting one of request item numbers 1 through 4; since the customer indicates one request item by selecting the number, it is possible for the customer to easily create a message.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0087] In step S120, a service person of the local service center searches for the product information from the product information DB 51, and the repair request information for from repair request information DB 56 based on the distributed repair request sheet 71, and then contacts the customer to confirm a trouble situation. The service person telephones the customer to confirm details of repair and then visits the customer to repair the product if necessary.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0105] In step S202, the service center 100 retrieves the customer information corresponding to the telephone number of the customer from the customer information DB 52, and then generates a list of products that the customer purchased. The service center 100 replies to the customer-cellular phone 40 by sending generated list of the products as the purchased product list.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0112] The request product information 713 includes a maker name, a manufacture number, a product name, a warranty period showing a warranty expiration date for the product that the customer purchased and information showing whether or not the product had been repaired before.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0116] The shipping-to information 721 includes an address of the customer who requests to repair, a name, a telephone number and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0118] The shipping-from information 725 includes an address of the local service center that repaired, a name, a telephone number and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0155] Databases maintained by the service center according to the embodiment of the present invention will now be described.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0157] In FIG. 14A, the product information DB 51, for example, may be a database (DB) for products registered by makers that make a contract with the service center 100. Each product information maintained in product information DB 51 includes a record number, a manufacture number of a product, a product name, a warranty period showing a period in which the product is guaranteed, a replacement time showing a time to replace the product, a collection fee showing an expense to collect the product, lot information showing a lot by which the product is manufactured, a manufactured date of the product, a maker name that manufactured the product, a maker e-mail to contact the maker and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0158] The warranty period is referred to when the customer information is registered in the customer information DB 52.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0167] In FIG. 15A, each customer information, which the service center 100 registered in the customer information DB 52, includes a record number, warranty information concerning a warranty, a cellular phone number of the customer, a phone e-mail of the customer, a name of the customer, an address of the customer and the like. The warranty information includes the purchase number including a shop number, a product name and a manufacture number for purchased product information, a device address, a purchased date when the customer purchased the product, a warranty period for guaranteeing the product and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0171] A date calculated by adding the warranty period managed in the product information DB 51 to the purchased date is defined as the warranty period in the warranty information. The warranty period is used when the customer requests to repair the product.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0193] According to the embodiment of the present invention, the service center 100 centralizes the information concerning products that are sold and customers that purchased. Therefore, when the product that the customer purchased needs repair, the service center 100 can inform the warranty period to the customer in response to the repair request message from the customer-cellular phone 40. Consequently, the customer is not required to maintain a warranty paper sheet for the product that the customer purchased. Also, in this case, it is possible for the customer to make a repair request by simply selecting a product from the purchased product list displayed at the customer-cellular phone 40.

CLAIMS:

1. A method for managing product information, said method comprising the steps of: (a) retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer, from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; (b) informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved in said step (a) to the customer-terminal; and (c) conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.
2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step (c) comprises the step of deleting the purchased product identification and the warranty information of a product identified by the purchased product identification, which purchased product identification is received from the customer-terminal, from the sales information management database when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to delete information related to a product that the customer purchased.
3. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and said step (c) comprises the steps of: (d) distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching from the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and (e) maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database.
5. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said step (b) comprises the steps of: checking whether or not a same repair is conducted within a predetermined period, by searching for the repair history information from said repair history database based on the purchased product identification received from the customer; and informing said warranty information and said request items with a check result to the customer.
6. The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising the steps of: (f) searching for the purchased product identification corresponding to the repair contents showing a recall from

said repair history database; (g) extracting the customer information from said sales information management database based on the purchased product identification searched in the step (f); and (h) informing recall information to recall a product, to each customer who purchased the product based on the customer information extracted in the step (g).

7. The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising the steps of: (i) searching for the repair history information from the repair history information database based on the purchased product identification when a request message including the purchased product identification and requesting a repair status is received from the customer; and (j) sending the repair status created based on the repair history information searched in the step (i) to the customer-terminal.

10. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the steps of: (o) maintaining the purchased product identification including shop identification identifying a shop and the customer information by corresponding to the purchased product identification in said sales information management database; and (p) creating a product list listing product information of purchased product of the customer based on the purchased product identification corresponding to the customer information retrieved from the sales information management database when the customer information is received, and sending the product list to the customer-terminal.

11. The method as claimed in claim 10, further comprising the steps of: (q) obtaining the purchased product identification of products which the shop sold, by searching for the shop identification of the shop from said sales information management database when a request message requesting to obtain information related to product, which are sold by the shop and are consumed, is received from the shop-terminal of the shop; (r) creating need-to-replace product information of products that are identified by the purchased product identification obtained in the step (q) and are needed to replace, by referring to a table maintaining a replacement time of each product; and (s) notifying the need-to-replace product information to the shop-terminal.

12. The method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising the step of sending advertisement information based on the customer information retrieved from said sales information management database by the purchased product identification of the product, which are needed to replace, when advertisement information including advertisement contents is received from the shop-terminal.

13. A computer-readable recording medium having a program recorded thereon for causing a computer to manage product information, said program comprising the codes of: (a) retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer, from a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; (b) informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved by said code (a) to the customer-terminal; and (c) conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.

14. The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 13, wherein said sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and said code (c) comprises the codes of: (d) distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching from the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and (e) maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database.

15. An apparatus for managing product information, said apparatus comprising: a sales information management database managing the purchased product identification identifying a product that the customer purchased and the warranty information showing a warranty of the product; a warranty information retrieving part retrieving warranty information corresponding to the purchased product identification received from a customer-terminal used by a customer,

from said sales information management database; a request item informing part informing selective request items with the warranty information retrieved by said warranty information retrieving part to the customer-terminal; and a request process conducting part conducting a request process corresponding to one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal.

16. The apparatus as claimed in claim 15, wherein said sales information management database manages the customer information concerning the customer by corresponding to the purchased product identification of the product that the customer purchased, and said request process conducting part comprises: a repair request sheet distributing part distributing a repair request sheet including repair information for a repair person who is selected by searching from the sales information management database based on the customer information corresponding to the purchased product identification receive from the customer-terminal when one of the selective request items, which is indicated from the customer-terminal, shows a request to repair the product that the customer purchased; and a repair contents maintaining part maintaining repair contents conducted by the repair person and the purchased product identification of a repaired product as repair history information to a repair history database.

17. A method for requesting to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, said method comprising the steps of: displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from said product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items are received from the support center.

18. A computer-readable recording medium having a program recorded thereon for causing a computer to request to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, said computer-readable recording medium comprising the codes of: (v) displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; (w) sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from said product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and (x) requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items are received from the support center.

19. An apparatus for requesting to repair a purchased product through a customer-terminal, said apparatus comprising: a displaying part displaying a product list listing purchased products at a display unit of the customer-terminal; a sending part sending purchased product identification identifying a product selected from said product list by a customer using the customer-terminal, to a support center supporting the product; and a repair requesting part requesting to repair the product identified by the purchased product identification by informing the support center one of selective request items, which is selected by the customer, when warranty information showing warranty contents of the product and the request items are received from the support center.

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1. Document ID: US 6728685 B1

Using default format because multiple data bases are involved.

L5: Entry 1 of 7

File: USPT

Apr 27, 2004

US-PAT-NO: 6728685

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6728685 B1

TITLE: Communication schema of online reporting system and method related to online orders for consumer products having specific configurations

DATE-ISSUED: April 27, 2004

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Ahluwalia; Gurpreet	Troy	MI		

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/26

[Full](#) [Title](#) [Citation](#) [Front](#) [Review](#) [Classification](#) [Date](#) [Reference](#) [Abstract](#) [Claims](#) [KMC](#) [Draw Desc](#) [Image](#)

2. Document ID: US 6654726 B1

L5: Entry 2 of 7

File: USPT

Nov 25, 2003

US-PAT-NO: 6654726

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6654726 B1

TITLE: Communication schema of online system and method of status inquiry and tracking related to orders for consumer product having specific configurations

DATE-ISSUED: November 25, 2003

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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ASSIGNEE-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY	TYPE CODE
Ford Motor Company	Dearborn	MI			02

APPL-NO: 09/ 538516 [PALM]

DATE FILED: March 29, 2000

PARENT-CASE:

RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS This application claims the benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/561,644, filed May 2, 2000, and entitled Method and System for Configuring and Ordering

Consumer Product, which claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/163,755, filed Nov. 5, 1999, and entitled Automotive Internet Business Methods and Systems. This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/542,637, filed on Apr. 4, 2000, and entitled, "Communication Schema of Online System and Method of Ordering Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations". This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/539,392 filed on Mar. 30, 2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Locating Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations in the Enterprise Production Pipeline and Inventory". This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/542,413 filed on Apr. 4, 2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Reporting Related to Orders for Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations". This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/543,833 filed on Apr. 4, 2000, and entitled, "Communication Schema of Online Reporting System and Method Related to Online Orders for Consumer Products Having Specific Configurations". This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/543,686 filed on Apr. 5, 2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Ordering and Specifying Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations". This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/543,860, filed on Apr. 5, 2000, and entitled, "Communication Schema of Online System and Method of Locating Consumer Product in the Enterprise Production Pipeline". This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/537,190 filed on Mar. 29, 2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Status Inquiry and Tracking Related to Orders for Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations".

INT-CL: [07] C06 F 17/60

US-CL-ISSUED: 705/26; 705/28

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/26; 705/28

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 705/26, 705/27, 705/28

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

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ART-UNIT: 3627

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Olszewski; Robert P.

ASSISTANT-EXAMINER: Jaketic; Bryan

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Baker Botts LLP Hanze; Carlos L.

ABSTRACT:

An online communication schema for inquiring and tracking status of an online order for a product is provided. The communication schema comprises a consumer status request message, which includes a source identifier identifying a web site from which the consumer status request message originated, and a customer identifier identifying a customer who originated the status request message. The communication schema also comprises a consumer status reply message, which includes an order number, and order status information.

39 Claims, 47 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Abstract	Claims	KWIC	Draw. Desc	Image
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□ 3. Document ID: US 6625581 B1

L5: Entry 3 of 7

File: USPT

Sep 23, 2003

US-PAT-NO: 6625581

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6625581 B1

TITLE: METHOD OF AND SYSTEM FOR ENABLING THE ACCESS OF CONSUMER PRODUCT RELATED INFORMATION AND THE PURCHASE OF CONSUMER PRODUCTS AT POINTS OF CONSUMER PRESENCE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW) AT WHICH CONSUMER PRODUCT INFORMATION REQUEST (CPIR) ENABLING SERVLET TAGS ARE EMBEDDED WITHIN HTML-ENCODED DOCUMENTS

Record List Display

DATE-ISSUED: September 23, 2003

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Perkowski; Thomas J.	Darien	CT		

ASSIGNEE-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY	TYPE CODE
IPF, Inc.	Stamford	CT			02

APPL-NO: 09/ 447121 [PALM]

DATE FILED: November 22, 1999

PARENT-CASE:

RELATED CASES This Application is a Continuation-in-Part of Application 09/441,973 filed Nov. 17, 1999; which is a Continuation-in-Part of application Ser. No. 09/284,917 filed Jun. 25, 1999 which was entered into the U.S. on Apr. 21, 1999 which is a National Stage Entry Application from International Application No. PCT/US97/19227 filed Oct. 27, 1997, published as WIPO Publication No. WO 98/19259 on May 7, 1998; as well as a Continuation-in-Part of the following U.S. applications: Ser. No. 08/736,798 filed Oct. 25, 1996, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,918,214; Ser. No. 08/752,136 filed Nov. 19, 1996, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,979; Ser. No. 08/826,120 filed Mar. 27, 1997; U.S. Pat. No. 08/854,877 filed May 12, 1997, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,950,173; Ser. No. 08/871,815 filed Jun. 9, 1997, now abandoned; and U.S. Ser. No. 08/936,375 filed Sep. 24, 1997, each said Application is commonly owned by IPF, Inc., and is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety as if fully set forth herein.

FOREIGN-APPL-PRIORITY-DATA:

COUNTRY	APPL-NO	APPL-DATE
JP	6-107574	April 22, 1994
FR	96 12524	October 6, 1996

INT-CL: [07] G06 F 17/60

US-CL-ISSUED: 705/27; 705/26, 705/14, 709/200, 709/245

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/27; 705/14, 705/26, 709/200, 709/245

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 705/26, 705/27

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

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WO 98/38589	September 1998	WO	
WO 98/38761	September 1998	WO	
WO 98/51035	November 1998	WO	
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WO 01/01586	January 2001	WO	
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March 2001

WO

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May 2001

WO

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ART-UNIT: 3625

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Coggins; Wynn W.

ASSISTANT-EXAMINER: Fadok; Mark

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Perkowski, Esq., PC; Thomas J.

ABSTRACT:

Method of and system for delivering consumer product related information to consumers over the Internet. The system and method involves creating an UPN-encoded Consumer Product Information

(CPIR) enabling Applet for each consumer product registered within a manufacturer-managed UPN/URL database management system. Each CPIR-enabling Applet is encapsulated within an executable file and then stored in the UPN/URL database management system. Each CPIR-enabling Applet is searchable and downloadable by, for example, (1) retailers purchasing products from an electronic-commerce enabled product catalog, (2) advertisers desiring to link consumer product information to Web-based product advertisements, or (3) anyone having a legitimate purpose of disseminating such information within the stream of electronic commerce. After downloading and extraction from its encapsulating file, the CPIR-enabling Applet is embedded within an HTML-encoded document associated with, for example, an EC-enabled store, on-line auction site, product advertisement, Internet search engine or directory, and the like. Upon encountering such an Applet-encoded HTML document on the WWW, the consumer need only perform a single mouse-clicking operation to automatically execute the underlying CPIR-enabling Applet (on either the client or server side of the network), causing a UPN-directed search to be performed against the manufacturer-defined UPN/URL Database, and the results thereof displayed in an independent Java GUI, without disturbing the consumer's point of presence on the WWW. Preferably, the CPIR-enabling Applets are realized using Java.TM. technology, although it is understood that alternative technologies can be used to practice the system and methods of the present invention.

28 Claims, 78 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Abstract	Claims	KWIC	Drawn Desc	Image
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4. Document ID: US 6609108 B1

L5: Entry 4 of 7

File: USPT

Aug 19, 2003

US-PAT-NO: 6609108

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6609108 B1

TITLE: Communication schema of online system and method of ordering consumer product having specific configurations

DATE-ISSUED: August 19, 2003

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Pulliam; Timothy E.	Westland	MI		
Bartkowiak; Don G.	Livonia	MI		
Champagne; Daryl L.	Northville	MI		

ASSIGNEE-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY	TYPE CODE
Ford Motor Company	Dearborn	MI			02

APPL-NO: 09/ 542637 [PALM]

DATE FILED: April 4, 2000

PARENT-CASE:

RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS This application claims the benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/561,644, filed May. 2, 2000, and entitled Method and System for Configuring and Ordering Consumer Product, which claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/163,755, filed Nov. 5, 1999, and entitled Automotive Internet Business Methods and Systems. This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/538,516, filed on Mar. 29, 2000, and entitled, "Communication Schema of Online System and Method of Status Inquiry and Tracking Related to Orders for Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations." This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/539,392 filed on Mar. 30,

2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Locating Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations in the Enterprise Production Pipeline and Inventory." This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/542,413 filed on Apr. 4, 2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Reporting Related to Orders for Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations." This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/543,833 filed on Apr. 4, 2000, and entitled, "Communication Schema of Online Reporting System and Method Related to Online Orders for Consumer Products Having Specific Configurations." This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/543,686 filed on Apr. 5, 2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Ordering and Specifying Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations." This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/543,860, filed on Apr. 5, 2000, and entitled, "Communication Schema of Online System and Method of Locating Consumer Product in the Enterprise Production Pipeline." This application is related to co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 09/537,190 filed on Mar. 29, 2000, and entitled, "Online System and Method of Status Inquiry and Tracking Related to Orders for Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations."

INT-CL: [07] G06 F 17/60

US-CL-ISSUED: 705/27

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/27

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 705/26, 705/27

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

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U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/537,190 entitled Online System and Method of Status Inquiry and Tracking Related to Orders for Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations, filed Mar. 29, 2000, 118 pages.

U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/539,392 entitled Online System and Method of Locating Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations in the Enterprise Production Pipeline and Inventory, filed Mar. 31, 2000, 120 pages.

U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/542,413 entitled Online System and Method of Reporting Related to Orders for Consumer Product Having Specific Configurations, filed Apr. 1, 2000, 119 pages.

U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/543,833 entitled Communication Schema of Online Reporting System and Method Related to Online Orders for Consumer Products Having Specific Configurations, filed Apr. 5, 2000, 118 pages.

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ART-UNIT: 2167

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Olszewski; Robert P.

ASSISTANT-EXAMINER: Jaketic; Bryan

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Baker & Botts, LLP. Hanze; Carlos L.

ABSTRACT:

An online communication schema for communicating online vehicle orders is provided. The communication schema includes a customer request message, which includes an order message having order information, contact information and vehicle configuration. The order message includes a fleet order message, a retail order message, and a tagged order message. The communication schema further includes a lead message having lead information, contact information, vehicle configuration, and dealer information. The communication schema further includes an order confirmation message.

36 Claims, 47 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Abstract	Claims	KWIC	Draw Desc	Image
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5. Document ID: US 6298332 B1

L5: Entry 5 of 7

File: USPT

Oct 2, 2001

US-PAT-NO: 6298332

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6298332 B1

TITLE: CD-ROM product label apparatus and method

DATE-ISSUED: October 2, 2001

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Montague; David R.	Mapleton	UT	84664	

APPL-NO: 09/ 306077 [PALM]

DATE FILED: May 6, 1999

INT-CL: [07] G06 F 17/60

US-CL-ISSUED: 705/27; 705/1, 705/10, 705/6, 705/14

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/27; 705/1, 705/10, 705/14, 705/6

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 340/572.6, 340/551, 340/572, 340/572.1, 235/381, 235/462.41, 235/462.25, 235/375, 235/462, 369/273, 705/1, 705/10, 705/14, 705/6, 705/27

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

PAT-NO	ISSUE-DATE	PATENTEE-NAME	US-CL
<u>5619416</u>	April 1997	Kosarew	705/27
<u>5899980</u>	May 1999	Wilf et al.	705/26
<u>6049797</u>	April 2000	Guha et al.	707/6

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FOREIGN-PAT-NO	PUBN-DATE	COUNTRY	US-CL
91103705	January 1992	EP	

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ART-UNIT: 212

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Stamber; Eric W.

ASSISTANT-EXAMINER: Tesfamariam; Mussie

ABSTRACT:

A CD-ROM provides all or part of a product labeling system for engaging purchasers. Executables, data, or both are recorded on a CD-ROM hang-tag or other product labeling structure in order to deliver to a consumer or purchaser engaging presentations of product information or registration templates. As a result, purchasers may receive launchers, browsers, viewers, e-mail systems, facsimile centers, players, or interface brokers for the foregoing, if they are organically installed already on a workstation of a purchaser. Software may provide catalog presentations, user registration templates, communications, linkers, or engines, and the like. Operation modules and profile builders may provide information over ready links implemented by software on the CD-ROM. In certain embodiments, entertainment, games, skill tests, and the like, recorded on a CD-ROM hang-tag may engage a purchaser and provide purchaser profiling information, product purchasing information, and the like to a vendor, while providing additional product information, warranty registrations, and the like, to a purchaser.

28 Claims, 9 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Claims	KMTC	Drawn Desc	Image
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6. Document ID: US 6012045 A

L5: Entry 6 of 7

File: USPT

Jan 4, 2000

US-PAT-NO: 6012045

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6012045 A

TITLE: Computer-based electronic bid, auction and sale system, and a system to teach new/non-registered customers how bidding, auction purchasing works

DATE-ISSUED: January 4, 2000

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Barzilai; Nizan	Hollywood	FL	33021	
Davidson; Ron	Hollywood	FL	33021	

APPL-NO: 08/ 886492 [PALM]

DATE FILED: July 1, 1997

INT-CL: [06] G06 F 17/60

US-CL-ISSUED: 705/37; 705/26, 379/93.12, 283/67

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/37; 283/67, 379/93.12, 705/26

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 705/26, 705/37, 380/25, 273/306, 283/67

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

U. S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

PAT-NO	ISSUE-DATE	PATENTEE-NAME	US-CL
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<u>5794219</u>	August 1998	Brown	705/37
<u>5803500</u>	September 1998	Mossberg	283/67
<u>5819914</u>	October 1998	Fujisaki	379/93.12
<u>5835896</u>	November 1998	Fisher et al.	705/37
<u>5845265</u>	December 1998	Woolston	705/37
<u>5862223</u>	January 1999	Walker et al.	380/25

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FOREIGN-PAT-NO	PUBN-DATE	COUNTRY	US-CL
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ART-UNIT: 275

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: MacDonald; Allen R.

ASSISTANT-EXAMINER: Irshadullah; M.

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Kain, Jr.; Robert C.

ABSTRACT:

The computer-based method of selling consumer products and consumer services includes, in one embodiment, the utilization of a computer system, which maintains the electronic bid, auction and sales records, and a plurality of customer computers interconnected with the computer system via a telecommunications link. The computer system electronically establishes a virtual showroom accessible by the customer's computers which displays consumer goods and services and information regarding the commonly available selling price for each product and service. For example, the system displays the manufacturer's suggested retail price or MSRP, a minimum opening bid price, information regarding the make, model and manufacturer or distributor of the offered product or service, and bid cycle data revealing the open, close and acceptance dates for the bids. The computer-based method electronically posts all bids made by bidders on the products and services during the bid period. The system accepts the highest bid while excluding bids greater than the lowest high bid from a single bidder. The system further electronically consummates the sale. Each bid costs the bidder a predetermined amount of money. The system also provides an electronic bid, auction and sale game. The computer-based method also electronically posts all winning and accepted bids thereby documenting the sale of the plurality of products and services purchased by the bidders.

21 Claims, 13 Drawing figures

7. Document ID: US 5950173 A

L5: Entry 7 of 7

File: USPT

Sep 7, 1999

US-PAT-NO: 5950173

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5950173 A

TITLE: System and method for delivering consumer product related information to consumers within retail environments using internet-based information servers and sales agents

DATE-ISSUED: September 7, 1999

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY	TYPE CODE
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APPL-NO: 08/ 854877 [PALM]

DATE FILED: May 12, 1997

PARENT-CASE:

RELATED CASES This is a Continuation-in-Part of copending application Ser. No. 08/826,120 entitled "System And Method For Collecting Consumer Product Related Information And Transmitting And Delivering The Same Along The Retail Supply And Demand Chain Using The Internet" filed Mar. 27, 1997, which is a Continuation of Ser. No. 08/752,136 entitled "System And Method For Finding Product and Service Related Information On The Internet" filed Nov. 19, 1996; which is a Continuation-in-Part of copending application Ser. No. 08/736,798 entitled "System And Method For Finding Product and Service Related Information On The Internet" filed on Oct. 25, 1996; each said Application being incorporated herein by reference in its entirety as if set forth fully herein.

INT-CL: [06] G06 F 17/60, G06 F 17/00

US-CL-ISSUED: 705/26; 705/27, 235/375, 395/200.49, 379/93.12

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/26; 235/375, 379/93.12, 705/27, 709/219

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 705/1, 705/16, 705/17, 705/21, 705/26, 705/27, 235/375, 235/376, 235/385, 235/454, 235/462, 395/200.31, 395/200.33, 395/200.47, 395/200.49, 379/93.12

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

U. S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

PAT-NO	ISSUE-DATE	PATENTEE-NAME	US-CL
<u>4654482</u>	March 1987	DeAngelis	379/93.12
<u>5640193</u>	June 1997	Wellner	348/7

ART-UNIT: 271

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Tkacs; Stephen R.

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Perkowski, Esq., P.C.; Thomas J.

ABSTRACT:

A system and method are disclosed for finding and serving consumer product-related information over the Internet to consumers in retail shopping environments, as well as at home and work, and on the road. The system includes Internet information servers which store information pertaining to Universal Product Number (e.g. UPC number) preassigned to each consumer product registered with the system, along with a list of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) that point to the location of one or more information resources on the Internet, e.g. World Wide Web-sites, which relate to such registered consumer products. Upon entering the UPC number into the system using a conventional Internet browser program running on any computing platform or system, the menu of URLs associated with the entered UPC number is automatically displayed for user selection. The displayed menus of URLs are categorically arranged according to specific types of product information such as, for example: product specifications and operation manuals; product wholesalers and retailers; product advertisements and promotions; product endorsements; product updates and reviews; product warranty/servicing; related or complementary products; product incentives including rebates, discounts and/or coupons; manufacturer's annual report and 10K information; electronic stock purchase; etc. Web-based techniques are disclosed for collecting the UPC/URL information from manufacturers and transmitting the same to the Internet-based databases of the system.

7 Claims, 18 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Abstract	Claims	KWIC	Draw. Desc	Image
------	-------	----------	-------	--------	----------------	------	-----------	----------	--------	------	------------	-------

Clear	Generate Collection	Print	Fwd Refs	Bkwd Refs	Generate OACS
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Term	Documents
CONSUMER	171649
CONSUMERS	66210
SERVICE	820041
SERVICES	252718
(4 AND (CONSUMER NEAR SERVICE)).PGPB,USPT,USOC,EPAB,JPAB,DWPI,TDBD.	7
(L4 AND (CONSUMER NEAR SERVICE)).PGPB,USPT,USOC,EPAB,JPAB,DWPI,TDBD.	7

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L10: Entry 1 of 3

File: PGPB

Jun 20, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020077923 A1

TITLE: Method and apparatus for performing on-line product registration

Pre-Grant Publication (PGPub) Document Number:
20020077923

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0022] By accessing merchant web server 130, the customer can register products he or she has purchased to activate warranties and provide traditional product registration information such as product updates, recalls, and promotions, for example. In accordance with the present invention, the registration process provides an opportunity for the merchant to offer to sell the customer additional products that may enhance his or her use and enjoyment of the purchased product being registered. For example, if the purchased product is a personal computer, the merchant may offer the customer various accessories such as a backup drive or modem, for example. Moreover, the registration process may be used to elicit information from the customer that allows the merchant to more precisely offer the customer particular products or services that best suit his or her needs. Returning to the example of the personal computer, during the registration process the merchant may prompt the customer to identify any additional equipment they own which is associated with the computer such as a game board. If the merchant determines that the customer does not have an appropriate user interface such as a joystick, for example, the merchant may immediately offer the customer a selection of different joysticks.

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L14: Entry 3 of 16

File: PGPB

Aug 29, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020120519 A1

TITLE: Distributed information methods and systems used to collect and correlate user information and preferences with products and services

Abstract Paragraph:

The present invention is related to a distributed information system used to collect and correlate user information with products and services. One method in accordance with the present invention comprises providing a first terminal in a store which is networked to a server having item and services databases, receiving an indication from a customer that the customer wants to purchase a first item-type, receiving profile information related to the first-item type from the customer, and based on the profile information, selecting a plurality of items from the item database corresponding to the first item-type and a plurality of related services of a first service type from the services database. The method further comprises providing a ranking the selected plurality of items and related services, and receiving an order for at least one of the ranked selected plurality of items and at least one of the related services.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0010] One embodiment of the present invention provides utility suppliers with information related to consumers of utility services or products, such as electricity, gas, water, telecommunication services (including, but not limited to wireless services, cellular services, paging services, and wired phone services), cable, broadband services (including, but not limited to ADSL, DSL, T1, satellite, and cable services), heating oil, and other related products and services. Based on the consumer information, one or more suppliers may generate offers to provide the products and services to consumers, which are then provided to the consumers. More generally, one embodiment of the present invention may be used to facilitate deals between suppliers and purchasers of products and services, where the price of the products or services are based at least in part on a given customer's characteristics or preferences. These customer characteristics may relate to, by way of example, the customer usage of a product or service, such as customer's usage amount, usage location, and time of usage, and/or to financial characteristics, including credit worthiness, payment history, assets, debt, and related characteristics. Such products and services may include leases, mortgages, insurance, investment instruments, and the like.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0019] One aspect of the present invention is a method of facilitating the bidding process over a network for the supply of utility services, the method comprising: receiving over a network individual historical utility consumption and use information for corresponding service consumers; generating individual profiles, based at least in part on the historical consumption and use information, for at least a first portion of the consumers; providing over the network information corresponding to the individual profiles to at least a first utility service supplier; receiving a bid from the first utility supplier to supply utility service to at least a first consumer in the first portion of consumers; and providing the bid to at least a first recipient.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0022] Yet another aspect of the present invention is a method of requesting offers to supply utility services to consumers, the method comprising: receiving utility service usage information from a plurality of consumers; generating individual profiles, based at least in part on the utility service usage information, for the plurality of consumers;

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0025] Another aspect of the present invention is a method of generating offers to supply

utility services to consumers, the method comprising: providing a first set of offer elements related to providing a first utility service to a consumer; receiving a user selection of offer elements from the first set that are to be included in the offer to the consumer; receiving from the user at least a first value associated with at least a first of the selected offer elements; and providing an offer to the consumer based on at least the selected offer elements and the first value.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0026] Still another aspect of the present invention is a method of requesting offers over to supply services to consumers, the method comprising: generating individual profiles for the plurality of consumers based on information received over a network; providing information corresponding to the individual profiles to at least a first offeror of a first service; and receiving an offer from the first offeror to supply the first service to an aggregated group of consumers, wherein the aggregated group is at least partly selected by the first offeror from the plurality of consumers.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0028] Another aspect of the present invention is a networked provisioning system, comprising: a first terminal located in a store, the first terminal configured to receive customer profile information and a customer request for information on at least a first item-type; a first computer system configured to receive customer profile information and the customer request from the first terminal, product information over a network from a product provider computer system, and service information over the network from a service provider computer system, wherein the product information is related to the first item-type, and to store the received customer profile information, product information, and service information in at least a first database; a first module stored in the first computer system, the first module configured to select product information and service information and rank products corresponding to the product information and services corresponding to the service information based on at least the customer profile information and the customer request; a second module stored in the first computer system to receive at least a portion of the selected product information, service information, and rankings and to transmit the received selected product information, service information, and rankings to the first terminal; and a third module stored in the first computer system configured to receive an order from the customer for at least a first product related to the transmitted selected product information and further configured to instruct at least a first store employee to provide the ordered item to the customer.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0029] Yet another aspect of the present invention is a networked provisioning system, comprising: a first instruction configured to be stored on a terminal located in a store, the first instruction configured to receive customer profile information and a customer request for information related to at least one of a first product and a first service; a second instruction configured to be stored on a first computer system, the second instruction configured to receive information from the first terminal, including customer profile information and the request for information related to at least one of the first product and the first service; a third instruction configured to receive product information over a network from a product provider computer system, and service information over the network from a service provider computer system, including information related to the at least one of a first product and a first service; a fourth instruction configured to selectively transmit to the first terminal at least portions of at least one of the product information and the service information; a fifth instruction configured to rank at least one of products corresponding to the product information and services corresponding to the service information based on at least the customer profile information and the customer request; a sixth instruction configured to provide ranking information to the first terminal; a seventh instruction configured to transmit an offer of service corresponding to the first product in response to at least one of the customer request information on the first product and ordering the first product; and an eighth instruction configured to activate service corresponding to the offered service at least partly in response to the customer accepting the offer.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0065] The present invention is related to methods and systems for facilitating transactions involving goods and services between suppliers and consumers of services, such as telecommunication services, utility services, and associated services.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0066] One embodiment of the present invention provides utility suppliers with information related to consumers of utility services or products, such as electricity, gas, water, telecommunication services (including, but not limited to wireless services, cellular services, paging services, and wired phone services), cable, broadband services (including, but not limited to ADSL, DSL, T1, satellite, and cable services), heating oil, and other related products and services. Based on the consumer information, one or more suppliers may generate offers to provide the products and services to consumers, which are then provided to the consumers. More generally, one embodiment of the present invention may be used to facilitate deals between suppliers and purchasers of products and services, where the price of the products or services are based at least in part on a given customer's characteristics or preferences. These customer characteristics may relate to, by way of example, the customer usage of a product or service, such as customer's usage amount, usage location, and time of usage, and/or to financial characteristics, including credit worthiness, payment history, assets, debt, and related characteristics. Such products and services may include leases, mortgages, insurance, investment instruments, and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0071] By way of example, if a consumer wants to participate in the consumer/supplier market place system in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the consumer may register at a Web site associated with a neutral manager of the consumer/supplier market system. The consumer may be asked which of several services, such as utility services, including electricity, gas, water, telecommunication service, cable, broadband service, heating oil, and/or other products and services, the consumer wants suppliers to bid on, and whether the consumer is a residential or commercial entity. The consumer may select one or more of the services and/or products. The consumer is then presented with one or more forms asking for information that will be used to build the consumer's profile for a selected service. Different forms may be provided for residential and commercial users.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0083] The store terminal may be managed by a separate entity which has contracted to provide the terminal and/or related services to the store in exchange for a percentage or fixed amount for sales made using the terminal. The separate entity coordinates collecting the user information, product information, and service information, and processes the information and provides the processed information appropriately to the store, product vendors, service vendors, and customers. For example, the information and supplier offers may then be provided to the user via the store terminal. Once the user selects products and services to purchase, the product fulfillment is performed by the store. This advantageously allows the store to associate and offer to consumers both products and related services and to participate in the fulfillment phase of purchases, without having to manage relationships with vendors and related service providers. In particular, the related services may be those needed to use the product, such as energy sources, wireless services, or other telecom services.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0085] The provided information may include make, model number, price, dimensions, storage capacity, energy efficiency, location in the store (aisle number or other designator), available colors and/or inventory status for one or more refrigerators. Further, in one embodiment, the user is offered related services. For example, in the case of a refrigerator, the user may be offered electricity service. Optionally, the user may be presented with several service plans from one or more electricity suppliers. In association with the service plans the calculated energy cost savings for the selected refrigerators is provided. Thus, the user is presented in real-time with current information on the desired product is able to make an informed decision regarding the product as well as regarding the associated offered services. Optionally, user electricity usage information and geographical locations may be requested so that suppliers can bid to supply services as similarly discussed above.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0090] The customer is also asked what service plan and phone features the customer desires. The customer is requested to identify whether the customer is a member of a group that is entitled to a special plan, plan price, or discount. Further, the customer is asked what is the desired contract duration, whether the customer would consider purchasing from a reseller, whether the customer would consider paying the bill online, and to indicate the relative importance of price and quality. The customer is also requested to indicate with the user is

interested in receiving information on other services, such as ISP services, local and long distance phone service, and on handset related accessories. The customer then submits requested information.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0092] In addition, the user may be presented with information on related products or services. For example, the system may suggest a hands-free unit, an additional battery, a carrying case, and the like compatible with the selected phone. Similarly, the user may be presented with an extended warranty plan for the phone. The user can then select the desired phone, service, and related products and services. If the user was not satisfied with the selection of phones and service plans, the user can alter the user's profile information so emphasize certain characteristics related to the desired features for the phones or service plans.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0097] FIG. 17 illustrates one example process or method 1700 of a purchase process in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, including the purchase of a wireless phone and related service. At state 1702, the customer can elect to shop for a phone either by visiting a retail "bricks and mortar" store, or via an online site. If the customer decides to shop in a retail "bricks and mortar" store, the process 1700 proceeds to state 1704. Then the customer can elect to shop for the phone via an online terminal at state 1706, and enters in profile information, such as product service needs and preference information. Otherwise, at state 1708, the customer can provide the information to a sales person or other customer representative, who at state 1710, enters the customers product and service needs and preferences into the online terminal.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0114] Optionally, the suppliers may be asked to provide standardized terms so that consumers can better compare the offers. Thus, for example, while the rates offered by the suppliers may differ, many or all of the other terms, such as contract lengths, cancellation policies, warranties, and so on, are the same. In another embodiment, suppliers may provide a combination of standardized terms and supplier specific terms. Thus, for example, a supplier may agree to offer standardized warranties, but non-standard cancellation policies. This allows consumers to easily compare many terms, while still providing the supplier the option of offering some customized terms. In yet another embodiment, in addition to or in place of the two previous options, the supplier may elect to provide its own contract, without using standardized terms as defined by the consumer/supplier market system manager.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0143] FIG. 9C requests customer utility and usage information, including by way of example, the service account number, the service account address, the state where the service address is located, and the name of the current provider. Metering information, including the number of meters associated with the service account number, the meter number, rate class, and the meter billing address, may be requested as well. The form also includes usage related fields, including on, off, and mid peak usage times and quantities for different seasons. The customer is also requested to provide information on customer charges, PX energy credits, and revenue cycle services credits. The consumer may elect to be part of an aggregated load cost to receive better bids.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0157] The supplier, consumer/supplier market system manager, or other authorized entity may view the defined product or contract types using a report, such as that illustrated in FIG. 12. The report lists the product abbreviation and product name for each product defined by an exemplary supplier. The report may include additional information, such as which products are active, and in what states are they active.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0174] The CRM system module is used to establish and maintain relationships with the retailer's customers. The CRM module provides automated marketing, sales and customer care for the retailer's customers. For example, the CRM module may automatically transmit extended warranties or loss insurance offers to customer's who have purchased a product.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0176] The system components include an intermediary CRM module, a service plans database, a

hardware database, an infrastructure database, and an intermediary content database. The intermediary CRM module is used to establish and maintain relationships between the intermediary, individual customers and association customers for sales made directly by the intermediary to the customers. The CRM module provides automated marketing, sales and customer care. For example, the CRM module will automatically transmit extended warranties or loss insurance offers to customer's who have purchased a product.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0184] A bidding engine optionally couples one or more service providers, hardware or product providers, the intermediary site, and consumers. As similarly described above, the bidding engine allows product and service providers to bid to supply corresponding products and services to consumers. The consumers may be aggregated by the providers as described above, or may be pre-grouped. The pre-grouping may be, by way of example, in the form of professional or business associations.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0207] The correlation system operator or intermediary environment 3218 includes an HTML web server 3246 and virtual private network (VPN) 3244, which provide Internet connectivity. In addition, the HTML web server 3246 serves web pages used to provide the service and product information described above. The HTML web server 3246 and the VPN 3244 are connected through a firewall 3242 to the backend of the system 3218. The firewall 3242 provides security and limits access to the backend. The firewall 3242 is connected to a load balancing and presentation server 3240, which is in-turn connected to a local area network interconnecting the backend.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0208] The backend includes quality of service applications 3232, an informed decision engine 3234, an application server 3236, and business systems 3238 configured to access corresponding databases 3252, 3250, 3248 for the storage and retrieval of data. The quality of service applications include applications that enable the user to select service providers that offer the most satisfactory or best quality service based on a given user's needs. One such quality of service application is the telecommunications infrastructure quality of service application previously described. The informed decision engine 3234 aids in finding suitable product choices for the customer. For example, as similarly described above with respect to cell phone selection, the informed decision engine 3234 generates user questions regarding features the user desires for a given product type, and based on the user's responses, provides the user with information on products that meet the user's requirements or desires. The application server 3236 interfaces web browser-based thin clients, such as the workstations 3204, 3206, with backend databases and business applications. The business systems 3238 include, by way of example, marketing software, information technology development software, and back office functions.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0218] Further, information from the consumer may be collected via a terminal located at a conventional, physical, "bricks and mortar" store. Preference and usage data are collected at the store and based at least in part on the collected data, offers and related information may be generated specifically for the consumer. In addition, the store can optionally provide the product and/or activate the related services to the consumer before the consumer leaves the store.

CLAIMS:

13. A networked provisioning system, comprising: a first terminal located in a store, the first terminal configured to receive customer profile information and a customer request for information on at least a first item-type; a first computer system configured to receive customer profile information and the customer request from the first terminal, product information over a network from a product provider computer system, and service information over the network from a service provider computer system, wherein the product information is related to the first item-type, and to store the received customer profile information, product information, and service information in at least a first database; a first module stored in the first computer system, the first module configured to select product information and service information and rank products corresponding to the product information and services corresponding to the service information based on at least the customer profile information and the customer request; a second module stored in the first computer system configured to receive

at least a portion of the selected product information, service information, and rankings and to transmit the received selected product information, service information, and rankings to the first terminal; and a third module stored in the first computer system configured to receive an order from the customer for at least a first product related to the transmitted selected product information and further configured to instruct at least a first store employee to provide the ordered item to the customer.

19. A networked provisioning system, comprising: a first instruction configured to be stored on a terminal located in a store, the first instruction configured to receive customer profile information and a customer request for information related to at least one of a first product and a first service; a second instruction configured to be stored on a first computer system, the second instruction configured to receive information from the first terminal, including customer profile information and the request for information related to at least one of the first product and the first service; a third instruction configured to receive product information over a network from a product provider computer system, and service information over the network from a service provider computer system, including information related to the at least one of a first product and a first service; a fourth instruction configured to selectively transmit to the first terminal at least portions of at least one of the product information and the service information; a fifth instruction configured to rank at least one of products corresponding to the product information and services corresponding to the service information based on at least the customer profile information and the customer request; a sixth instruction configured to provide ranking information to the first terminal; a seventh instruction configured to transmit an offer of service corresponding to the first product in response to at least one of the customer requesting information on the first product and ordering the first product; and an eighth instruction configured to activate service corresponding to the offered service at least partly in response to the customer accepting the offer.

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